

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 07267 021218Z

13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7267

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (FORD, GERALD R.), PINT, KS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: OPPOSITION PARTY ATTITUDE

REF: SEOUL 7182

1. AMB AND DCM INVITED NDP CHAIRMAN KIM YONG-SAM TO LUNCH OCT 30 AS PART OF PROGRAM INTRODUCE AMB TO INFLUENTIAL KOREANS. (AMB HAD INFORMED ROKG THROUGH PM'S OFFICE IN ADVANCE OF INTENTION. ONLY REACTION WAS TO REQUEST AMB DISSUADE KIM FROM USING FORD VISIT FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL PURPOSES.) PORTION OF DISCUSSION DEALING WITH CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION AND NDP EFFORTS INTRODUCE BILL ON CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION CONTAINED REFTEL.

2. MUCH OF DISCUSSION CENTERED ON EFFECT OF FORD VISIT ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE AND ATTITUDE OF KOREANS TOWARD USG. KIM SAID SOME KOREANS WELCOMED VISIT IN EXPECTATION IT WILL FORCE ROKG TO PERMIT RELATIVE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, BUT THAT MOST WOULD INTERPRET IT AS DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT FOR ROKG AND ITS REPRESSIVE DOMESTIC POLICIES. ROKG WOULD, OF COURSE, ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY VISIT IN LATTER FASHION, PROBABLY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 07267 021218Z

BY TRYING TO INSERT WORDS OF PRAISE FOR PARK IN

COMMUNIQUE AND BY OTHER MORE SUBTLE MEANS. UNLESS USG TOOK SOME STEPS TO MAKE CLEAR ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPRESSIVE ACTS OF PARK REGIME, KOREAN PEOPLE WOULD LOSE FAITH IN US AS TRUE FRIEND OF KOREA AND EXPONENT OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. KIM SAID BEST MEANS OF PREVENTING THIS WOULD BE FOR PRES FORD TO MEET SEPARATELY DURING VISIT WITH OPPOSITION POLITICAL LEADERS, BOTH AS SYMBOLIC GESTURE AND TO PERMIT OPPOSITION TO EXPLAIN FACTS OF POLITICAL LIFE IN KOREA. HE FELT ALSO THAT PRES FORD SHOULD MAKE CLEAR IN ONE OR OTHER OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS HERE WHERE USG STANDS ON QUESTIONS OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. AMB ASSURED KIMUS REMAINED STRONG ADVOCATE OF PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS, AS CLEAR FROM VARIOUS OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT AND WELL PUBLICIZED ATTITUDES OF US PRESS AND CONGRESS. HE URGED THAT KIM AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE LEADERS NOT INTERPRET PRESIDENTIAL VISIT IN NARROW POLITICAL TERMS, BUT VIEW IT AS AFFIRMATION OF TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR KOREAN PEOPLE AND AS EXPRESSION OF CONTINUED US INTEREST IN KOREAN SECURITY. AMB ALSO GAVE DETAILED RATIONALE OF BROAD STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ENTERED INTO DECISION TO HAVE PRESIDENT VISIT ROK.

4. WITH RESPECT KIM'S REQUEST FOR PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FOR OPPOSITION LEADERS, AMB SAID SUCH MEETING WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE, GIVEN TIGHT SCHEDULE AND IMPROPRIETY INHERENT IN SUCH ARRANGEMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT ROKG WOULD INVITE OPPOSITION LEADERS TO ATTEND RECEPTION AND STATE DINNER, AND THAT THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO MEET PRESIDENT IF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VISIT WERE SCHEDULED. AMB ALSO ASSURED KIM THAT PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS WOULD NOT BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO MISINTERPRETATION WITH RESPECT TO TAKING PARTISAN POSITION ON ROK INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND URGED KIM NOT TO USE VISIT FOR HIS PARTISAN PURPOSES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 07267 021218Z

5. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT NDP HAD NOT YET ISSUED STATEMENT REGARDING VISIT AND PRESSED KIM FOR NDP TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IT WELCOMED PRESIDENT IN SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND RECOGNITION OF MUTUAL GOALS OF KOREAN AND AMERICAN PEOPLES. KIM SPARRED FOR A WHILE, FEELING OUT AMB ON POSSIBILITY OF TRADING OFF STATEMENT OF WELCOME FOR PRIVATE MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS, BUT EVENTUALLY CONCEDED THAT NDP WOULD ISSUE WELCOMING

STATEMENT AT APPROPRIATE TIME. HOWEVER, HE SAID STATEMENT WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE SOME REFERENCE TO HOPE THAT VISIT WOULD ENABLE PRES FORD TO UNDERSTAND "TRUE FACTS" OF ROK DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION.

6. COMMENT: KIM PROBABLY DID NOT REALLY EXPECT THAT AMB WOULD ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT. HE CLEARLY ANXIOUS, HOWEVER, TO LEAVE IMPRESSION THAT IN EYES KOREAN PEOPLE, VISIT WOULD CONSTITUTE TEST OF AMERICAN ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND TO UNDERSCORE NEED THAT PRES FORD DO OR SAY NOTHING THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS EXPLICIT SUPPORT FOR ROKG DOMESTIC POLITICAL POLICIES. I THINK THAT KIM LEFT LUNCHEON SOBERED AND WITHOUT ANY ILLUSIONS THAT PRESIDENT'S VISIT WILL BE OCCASION FOR US GETTING INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN KOREA.
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